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R 212120Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8711
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0899

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000594

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STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA
AMEMBASSY FOR PAO, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO CI VE
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - VENEZUELAN GOVERNANCE, RELATIONS WITH THE
U.S.

¶1. On March 20, TVN's "Medianoche." Quote:

"President Bush has had to withstand an avalanche of criticism...from comments that he is a coward and thickheaded to surveys that associate him with the word incompetent...Bush has announced a possible retaliation against Iran if it moves forward with its nuclear plan and threats against Israel.... President Chavez' statements do not seem to bother Washington. Once more they have opted to turn a deaf ear to words that might not be too far from accurate."

¶2. Government-owned, financially autonomous TVN. Quote:

"Some times too much diplomacy is tiring, other times, it is truly missed.... It is one thing to criticize the politics of a leader and another to insult that person's intelligence. Hugo Chavez called President Bush thickheaded (burro) and genocidal--among other things--which clearly does not help improve relations between Caracas and Washington."

YAMAUCHI